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ABSTRACT

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ON THE VALIDITY OF THE PSYCHOSOCIAL MATURITY INVENTORY: AN EXAMINATION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL MATURITY AND DOGMATISM

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Introductory Statement

The Center for Social Organization of Schools has two primary objectives: to develop a scientific knowledge of how schools affect their students, and to use this knowledge to develop better school practices and organization.

The Center works through three programs to achieve its objectives. The Schools and Maturity program is studying the effects of school, family, and peer group experiences on the development of attitudes consistent with psychosocial maturity. The objectives are to formulate, assess, and research important educational goals other than traditional academic achievement. The program has developed the Psychosocial Maturity (PSM) Inventory for the assessment of adolescent social, individual, and interpersonal adequacy. The School Organization program is currently concerned with authority-control structures, task structures, reward systems, and peer group processes in schools. It has produced a large-scale study of the effects of open schools, has developed the Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT) instructional process for teaching various subjects in elementary and secondary schools, and has produced a computerized system for school-wide attendance monitoring. The Careers program bases its work upon a theory of career development. It has developed a self-administered vocational guidance device and a self-directed career program to promote vocational development and to foster satisfying curricular decisions for high school, college, and adult populations.

This report, prepared by the Schools and Maturity program, examines the validity of the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory by investigating its relationship with the concept of dogmatism.

ABSTRACT

Form D of the PSM Inventory and the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale were administered to 325 10th grade students to test a predicted correlation between the Dogmatism Scale and the Change and Tolerance subscales of the PSM battery, and to examine the pattern of covariation between psychosocial maturity and dogmatism. A substantial negative correlation between Tolerance and Dogmatism was obtained, but the predicted relation between Dogmatism and Openness to Change was weak. The authors posit a peculiarity in the wording of the Change items to explain the lack of a more substantial correlation. The implications of differential male and female patterns of correlation are discussed.

Greenberger and Sørensen's model of psychosocial maturity (1974) integrates sociological and psychological perspectives of maturity by taking into account the requirements of society as well as the healthy development of the individual. Briefly, three general capacities are considered necessary for mature functioning in any given culture --Individual Adequacy, Interpersonal Adequacy, and Social Adequacy. Each of these dimensions of maturity is viewed as a composite of more basic attributes which vary in nature from one society to another. A model of psychosocial maturity which Greenberger and Sørensen have proposed for our own society is presented in Table 1. The model has been translated into a self-report instrument --the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory-- which has been used in numerous studies of adolescent development (Greenberger et al., 1974; Greenberger et al., 1975).

Insert Table 1 About Here

This study investigates the relationship between the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale (1960) and the subscales of the Psychosocial Maturity (PSM) Inventory. The purpose is twofold. First, by positing specific relationships between subscales of the PSM Inventory and the Dogmatism Scale, evidence for the construct validity of the PSM subscales may be obtained. (See Josselson et al., 1974 and Bond et al., 1974, for other validity studies of the Individual and Social Adequacy scales.) Second, an

examination of the pattern of covariation with dogmatism should permit a fuller appreciation of the nature of psychosocial maturity itself.

Rokeach (1954) has defined dogmatism as "(a) a relatively closed cognitive organization of beliefs and disbeliefs about reality, (b) organized around a central set of beliefs about absolute authority which, in turn, (c) provides a framework for patterns of intolerance toward others"(p. 195). Rokeach further defines dogmatism as referring to "a closed way of thinking . . . associated with an ideology regardless of content, an authoritarian outlook on life, an intolerance toward those with opposing beliefs, and a sufferance of those with similar beliefs" (Rokeach, 1960, pp. 4-5). Accordingly, the "closed mind" can be observed both in the practical world of political and religious beliefs, and in the more abstract world of philosophic thought. In refining the notion of dogmatism, Rokeach used the term "dogmatic" synonymously with "closed", that is, persons characterized as "high dogmatic" are seen as having closed minds and closed belief systems, whereas those characterized as "low dogmatic" are seen as having open minds and belief systems which are flexible and open to change.

Of specific concern in this study is the relationship between dogmatism and two PSM subscales, Change and Tolerance. No aspect of maturity should correlate positively with dogmatism (i.e., the more psychosocially mature an individual, the less he or she should fit the description of closed mindedness), but there is no compelling theoretical reason for certain of the subscales --for example, Communication and Work Orientation-- to be negatively correlated with dogmatism. Rather, these concepts and dogmatism might well be orthogonal. Individuals scoring high on the Openness to

Change and Tolerance subscales, however, should logically be less dogmatic than those who score low on these measures. Openness to socio-political change, as defined in Table 1, implies a general lack of rigid social attitudes because the individual with this attribute recognizes both the costs of the status quo and the costs of change. Tolerance of Individual and Cultural Differences denotes acceptance of people who differ from the norm, and again, an awareness of both the costs and benefits of tolerance (Greenberger and Sørensen, 1974).

Thus, two specific predictions were made: (1) No significantly positive correlation would be obtained between the Dogmatism Scale and the PSM subscales or summary scores; and (2) Significant negative correlations would be obtained between the Change and Tolerance subscales and the Dogmatism Scale.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 163 female and 162 male 10th grade students of a middle-class, predominantly white high school in a suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Procedure

The PSM Inventory[1] and the Dogmatism Scale were administered as part of a larger survey exploring family, school, and peer effects on psychosocial development. Subjects were told that the questionnaires were designed

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[1] Form D of the PSM battery was administered.

to elicit their opinions and attitudes on a wide variety of social issues and common, everyday experiences. Participation was voluntary and the entire testing session lasted approximately one hour.

Results and Discussion

Correlations between PSM scores and the Dogmatism Scale are presented in Table 2. Previous research has shown that significant differences exist between males and females on several of the PSM subscales (Greenberger, et al., 1974), females typically outscoring males of the same age on the three aspects of Social Adequacy. For this reason, separate analyses were performed for males and females.

As Table 2 indicates, the first prediction was clearly supported. All correlations of Dogmatism with PSM subscales and summary scores were negative. The second prediction was partially supported. For both males and females, the largest zero-order product moment correlations between subscales was that between Tolerance and Dogmatism. The relationship between

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Insert Table 2 About Here

Openness to Change and Dogmatism was not as strong as had been supposed, barely attaining significance at the 5% level in the male sample and not quite reaching statistical significance at the 5% level in the female sample.

The lower-than-expected negative correlation between Openness to Change and Dogmatism may be due in part to similarities in the wording of

the Change items and items on the Dogmatism scale. Items on the Change subscale are generally stated in more forceful, obligatory language than are the items of the other subscales (e.g., "A man shouldn't cook dinner for his wife and children unless the wife is sick."; "Schools should not let new methods of teaching, like TV and tapes, take up too much time in school."). The general "flavor" of these items is different from that of other subscales, where the statements are phrased more as personal opinions than unalterable social facts. (For example, from the Tolerance subscale, "It would not bother me to work with a person whose skin color is different from mine."; "I don't think I could be friends with a crippled person."). Another explanation of the lower-than-expected association between Openness to Change and Dogmatism lies in the relatively small variance of the Change subscale scores (the variance is smaller than that of any other PSM subscale [Table 3]). Whether this smaller variance results from genuine consensus of opinion on the items or from uniform reactions to the wording of the items independent of their content will require further research.

A clear and consistent finding of potential importance is the generally stronger negative relationship between dogmatic thought and psychosocial maturity in the female sample. With the exception of the Roles and Change scores, where the correlations for both groups are virtually identical, all relationships were more pronounced in the female group. It should be noted that the sexes do <u>not</u> differ on the Dogmatism scale (see Table 3), but that, consistent with previous research, females tended to score in the more psychosocially mature direction on all PSM subscales. Thus, it appears that the more psychosocially mature the individual, the

better able we are to predict his or her degree of dogmatism. This certainly appeals to our intuitive notion of both the nature of psychosocial maturity itself and the dynamics of psychosocial development.

Although no predictions regarding other subscales were made, several findings are worth brief comment. The moderate relationship between two IA subscales, Identity and Self-reliance, and Dogmatism are not inconsistent with a growing body of literature (See Brown, 1965) which indicates that dogmatic individuals, in the formation of their beliefs, tend to rely more on authority from above than their own evaluation (i.e., they tend to be less self-reliant). The literature on the relation between "Identity" as defined here and Dogmatism is less clear (Brown, p. 500), some researchers concluding that dogmatic individuals possess a clearer, more positive (but less accurate) picture of themselves than less dogmatic persons, while others have concluded just the opposite. Our findings give moderate support to the latter view --that persons who possess a clear and unambivalent picture of who they are are also likely to be less dogmatic.

Summary

This study provides evidence for the construct validity of the Tolerance and Openness to Change subscales of the PSM Inventory through their predicted negative correlation with a measure of dogmatic thinking. Additionally, the implications of differential male and female patterns of covariation were examined and discussed. It was hypothesized that a more accurate statement about an individual's placement along the dogmatism continuum is possible given some knowledge of his level of psychosocial maturity.

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Table 1

Detailed Model of Psychosocial Maturity[a]

Individual Adequacy

- Self-reliance
  - absence of excessive need for social validation
  - sense of control
  - initiative
- Work Orientation
  - standards of competence
  - pleasure in work
  - general work skills
- Identity
  - clarity of self-concept
  - consideration of life goals
  - self-esteem
  - internalized values

Interpersonal Adequacy

- Communication Skills
  - ability to encode messages
  - ability to decode messages
  - empathy
- Enlightened Trust
  - rational dependence
  - rejection of simplistic views of human nature
  - awareness of constraints on trustworthiness
- Knowledge of Major Roles
  - role-appropriate behavior
  - management of role-conflict

Social Adequacy

- Social Commitment
  - feelings of community
  - willingness to work for social goals
  - readiness to form alliances
  - interest in long-term social goals
- Openness to Socio-political Change
  - general openness to change
  - recognition of costs of status quo
  - recognition of costs of change
- Tolerance of Individual and Cultural Differences
  - willingness to interact with people who differ from the norm
  - sensitivity to rights of people who differ from the norm
  - awareness of costs and benefits of tolerance

[a] From Greenberger, E. and Sørensen, Aa. B., 1974

Table 2

Correlations of PSM Subscales and Summary Scores with Dogmatism[a,b]

	Total Sample (n=325)	Females (n=163)	Males (n=162)
PSM			
Self-reliance	-.26	-.35	-.17
Work orientation	-.18	-.19	-.17
Identity	-.25	-.31	-.20
Communication	-.28	-.32	-.24
Roles	-.32	-.30	-.32
Trust	-.13	-.19	-.10
Social Commitment	-.23	-.33	-.13
Tolerance	-.39	-.46	-.33
Change	-.22	-.19	-.21
Individual Adequacy Summary Score	-.28	-.35	-.22
Social Adequacy Summary Score	-.34	-.44	-.29

[a]Items on the Dogmatism Scale are scored on a 6-point scale, from -3 to +3. For reasons of compatibility with computer software, we scored the items on a scale of 1 to 6.

[b]All correlations reported for the Total Sample are significant at or beyond p .05. For Males and Females, correlations of .17 and greater are signifcant at or beyond p .05.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of PSM Subscales and Summary Scores and Dogmatism Scale[a]

Scales	Total Sample (n=325)		Females (n=163)		Males (n=162)		t for Female-Male Difference
	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	
PSM							
Self-reliance	3.20	.52	3.28	.36	3.13	.43	3.41*
Work Orientation	2.73	.54	2.78	.51	2.68	.49	1.80
Identity	3.05	.58	3.04	.52	3.06	.50	.00
Communication	2.85	.44	2.90	.40	2.80	.37	2.34*
Roles	3.16	.55	3.28	.42	3.04	.42	5.15*
Trust	2.70	.47	2.63	.47	2.78	.38	3.16*
Social Commitment	3.10	.59	3.27	.45	2.93	.48	6.59*
Tolerance	3.16	.59	3.34	.44	2.98	.51	6.81*
Change	3.13	.54	3.28	.36	2.96	.49	6.71*
Individual Adequacy Summary Score	8.98	1.49	9.09	1.09	8.87	1.19	1.74
Social Adequacy Summary Score	9.38	1.56	9.89	.95	8.87	1.24	8.33*
Dogmatism	66.40	11.79	65.54	10.80	67.27	12.60	1.33

[a]Items on the Dogmatism Scale are scored on a 6-point scale, from -3 to +3. For reasons of compatibility with computer software, we scored the items on a scale of 1 to 6.

*Significant at $p < .05$.